United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General announces that, in order to end conflict in Afghanistan, he is ready to organize a gathering of participants from as many segments as possible of Afghan society.

- Secretary-General informs Security Council of his intention to ask General Assembly for appropriation of $200 million, to prepare for the first phase of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

- United Nations inspection team confronted by some 40 demonstrators at their Baghdad hotel.

- A five-person mission scheduled to arrive in Baghdad today for talks with Iraqi authorities on compliance with Security Council resolutions.

- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) agrees to loan $8.5 million to Government of Benin to help fund Atacora Rural Development Project.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issued a statement today assuring the Afghan people of his commitment to promote a political settlement to end the conflict in their country. With that purpose, he said, he was ready to organize a gathering, outside the region, of representatives from as many segments as possible of Afghan society, to agree upon steps leading to the establishment of a broad-based government through free and fair elections. He had asked his Personal Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan, Benon Sevan, to undertake intensive consultations to finalize the necessary arrangements.

Citing the "horrendous" casualties of the conflict, including a million dead, two million disabled and two million displaced, he said it was imperative that the decade-long conflict now be brought to an end.

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For information media—not an official record

He also called on all other governments to halt arms supplies and the financing of arms purchases to all sides in the Afghan conflict.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has informed the Security Council of his intention to submit a proposal to the General Assembly seeking an initial appropriation of $200 million, in order to prepare for the first phase of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

The information was conveyed in a letter to Security Council President, Sir David Hannay (United Kingdom), made public today. According to the Secretary-General's letter, on approval of the UNTAC implementation plan by the Council, the funds would become available for the procurement of accommodation, transportation, communication and other support equipment and services.

The full cost of deploying UNTAC has not yet been determined, the letter said, explaining that the amount would represent an assessment of initial requirements and would be taken into account against the full assessments to be levied against Member States, once the budget of UNTAC had been approved by the General Assembly. This approach, the Secretary-General said, would greatly facilitate the timely deployment of UNTAC and enhance prospects for the restoration of a durable peace in Cambodia.

The Secretary-General also pointed out that the President of the Supreme National Council, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the Cambodian parties and the international community had repeatedly stressed the need for the urgent deployment of UNTAC, in order to "prevent the erosion of the peace process".

In related news, the President of the Council, Sir David Hannay (United Kingdom), in a letter dated 24 January, said Members had been notified of the Secretary-General's proposal and welcomed his assurance to them that "a full and detailed breakdown" would be provided for the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee.

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As Iraqi police looked on today, 18 members of a United Nations inspection team were confronted by some 40 male demonstrators early this morning, in and outside their Baghdad hotel, as they arrived to conduct the seventh chemical and biological weapons inspection mission of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament.

According to a United Nations spokesman, team members, including Deputy Chief Inspector Karen Jansen, were jostled, shouted at and pinned against the wall of the lobby of the hotel, while others were trapped in a bus in front of the hotel, as demonstrators shouted slogans and jumped up and down on the United Nations vehicles. The inspectors eventually decided to force their way through the hostile crowd into the hotel. Iraqi police offered no assistance despite requests for intervention, saying later in response to inquiries, that they were not allowed to.

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The incident represented "a clear breach by Iraq of various special arrangements and United Nations Security Council resolutions concerning the immunities, and privileges, safety and access of the UN inspection team, in particular the status agreement of 14 May 1991 and United Nations Security Council Resolution 707 (1991)", the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, Rolf Ekeus, has informed the President of the Security Council and the Office of the Secretary-General of the incident. The seventh chemical and biological weapons inspection mission was scheduled to take place in Iraq from 27 January to 5 February.

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A United Nations spokesman told correspondents today, that another mission was scheduled to arrive in Baghdad today for talks with Iraqi authorities on the need for fuller compliance with Security Council resolutions. The resolutions require Iraq to disclose detailed information concerning its weapons of mass destruction and related research industries.

The five-person team, headed by John Gee of Australia and Patrice Palanque of France, will specifically ask Iraq to come forward with more detailed information, as required under Security Council resolution 715 (1991), adopted on October 11, by which the Council approved plans for the long-term monitoring of the disarmament of Iraq. Iraq's failure to provide the requested information is viewed as a serious obstacle to the implementation and long-term monitoring and verification of Iraq's obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, the spokesman said. Twenty-six inspections have been carried out since the Commission was created by the cease-fire resolution (687), on 3 April, 1991.

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More than half the cost of the second phase of the Atacora Rural Development Project in north-west Benin will be covered by a $8.52 million loan to the Government by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The loan agreement was signed in Rome today.

The IFAD estimates that over the six years of the project annual incremental production should reach 4,500 tonnes of tubers, 780 tonnes of meat products and 4,500 tonnes of cereals. The target population of 210,000 includes all the ethnic groups in the region and special provisions will be made to meet their economic and educational needs. Thirty percent of the funds from IFAD's credit scheme is to be reserved for women, who will also receive training in credit management, marketing techniques and agricultural development.

The signing of the agreement brings total IFAD assistance to Benin to over $32 million.

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